

Testimony provided to the 2013

Legislative Committee

State of Montana

In support of Medicaid Expansion

By

S. Kevin Howlett, Director

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Mr. Chairman, Committee Members,

For the record, I am S. Kevin Howlett, Director of Tribal Health & Human Services for the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes.

I am appearing before you to testify in support of Medicaid Expansion. The number of persons served on Medicaid is 2,700, of this 1,786 are children and 914 are adult participants. The user population for the Flathead is 11,200.

We have aggressively worked to enroll eligible participants in the Medicaid program. As a matter of record, our facility and those operated by the Indian Health Service programs are reimbursed at 100%; so there is no cost share or financial burden borne by the state for providing approved services in federal or tribal clinics.

In our clinics we generate revenue for services, as we bill Medicaid for services provided. The collection of third party revenue is an integral part of the financial structure of the operation of our clinics.

The dollars collected must be by law expended to increase the level of services including clinic care, contract care, facilities, staffing.

As a result of our collections efforts we have generated revenue sufficient to create 30 clinic positions, built a 23,000 sq ft out-patient clinic in Polson, and provided in-home care to tribal elders at a cost of \$1,000,000 per year.

We understand that a large number of potentially new enrollees will be Native American and currently obtain medical care in IHS and/or Tribal clinics. The inclusion of individuals who qualify for Medicaid will not necessarily increase the number of services or people; it will provide the opportunity to seek re-imbursement where we cannot at this time. Again, this is at no cost to the state, and will in fact provide a broader opportunity to expand care with additional resources generated by the collection of third party resources.

This is an opportunity to provide access to care for thousands of Montanans, generate revenue for badly needed health services for the Native American community through services provided in IHS or Tribally operated clinics, create meaningful good paying jobs, and increase the overall health status of Montana's citizens.

We encourage you to carefully weigh the positive aspects of this opportunity, and move to expand Medicaid in Montana.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I would be happy to answer any questions.